

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 214562

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ILO, ELAB, BE

SUBJECT: HOUTHUYS' COMMENTS ON US PARTICIPATION IN ILO

REF: BRUSSELS 7860

1. THE EMBASSY MAY WISH TO DRAW UPON THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FOR FUTURE USE IN MEETING THE POINTS MADE BY HOUTHUYS:

(A) HOUTHUYS IS MISINFORMED IF HE BELIEVES US HAS RAISED QUESTION OF FAIRNESS OF US CONTRIBUTION OF 25 OF REGULAR BUDGET OF ILO. US HAS PAID MAJOR SHARE OF ALL UN ACTIVITIES SINCE 1945 AS HE MUST BE AWARE, SO IF HE WISHES TO CAST ASPERSIONS REGARDING COUNTRY CONTRIBUTIONS HE SHOULD
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TURN HIS ATTENTION ELSEWHERE.

(B) HIS COMMENTS ON POLITICIZATION, WHICH ERRONEOUSLY IDENTIFY THE US POSITION SOLELY IN TERMS OF CRITICIZING EASTERN EUROPE, CLEARLY REVEAL A DOUBLE STANDARD MENTALITY. DOES HE NOT BELIEVE THAT ALL MEMBER COUNTRIES SHOULD LIVE UP TO THE STANDARDS SET FORTH IN THE CONVENTIONS THEY HAVE RATIFIED? DOES HE BELIEVE THAT THERE SHOULD BE VARIABLE STANDARDS OR NO STANDARDS AT ALL ACCORDING TO THE SO-CALLED SOCIAL SYSTEM OF THE COUNTRY INVOLVED?

US HAS VOTED IN FAVOR OF CITING COUNTRIES FOR VIOLATION OF STANDARDS ACCORDING TO THE MERITS OF THE CASE WITHOUT REGARD TO GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION.

HOUTHUYS SHOULD BE INFORMED THAT IF HE WISHES TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF THE US WORKERS CRITICISM OF VELDKAMP'S CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS IT WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS THIS DIRECTLY WITH THE US WORKER REPRESENTATIVE.

(C) REGARDING US STRATEGY, HOUTHUYS IS ILL-ADVISED TO RAISE THE QUESTION WHETHER US IS SEEKING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ILO. IT IS FOR THE OBJECTIVE OF MAINTAINING THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION IN PROMOTING WORKERS' RIGHTS AND WORKERS' STANDARDS THAT THE US HAS TAKEN THE POSITION IT HAS. IN VIEW OF THE EMBASSY'S DISCUSSIONS WITH HOUTHUYS THE DEPARTMENT SEES LITTLE REASON TO GO OVER THIS GROUND WITH HIM AGAIN. PERHAPS THE EMBASSY COULD MERELY NOTE THAT INsofar AS THE US IS CONCERNED THE QUESTION OF THE MOMENT IS CONTINUED US PARTICIPATION IN THE ILO, NOT EXPULSION OF ANY MEMBERS. FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH HIM REGARDING US STRATEGY SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

2. WITH RESPECT TO REQUEST FOR SUMMARY AND COMMENTS ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS, WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIFFERENCES WITH HOUTHUYS, THE EMBASSY MAY FIND USEFUL THE FOLLOWING QUOTE FROM AN ARTICLE BY AFL-CIO SECRETARY-TREASURER LANE KIRKLAND IN THE CURRENT ISSUE OF THE AFL-CIO FREE TRADE UNION NEWS: "THE COMMITTEE ON APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS
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AND RECOMMENDATIONS MADE A LARGELY OBJECTIVE REPORT THIS YEAR. THE SOVIET UNION WAS NOTED IN A SPECIAL PARAGRAPH FOR ITS VIOLATION OF THE CONVENTION PROHIBITING FORCED LABOR. THE CZECH GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF A SIMILAR PARAGRAPH FOR NON-OBSERVANCE OF THE CONVENTION ON FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION, SAVE FOR THE INTERVENTION OF THE WORKER CHAIRMAN (HOUTHUYS) AND THE SECRETARIAT OF THE COMMITTEE ITSELF.

"THE WORKER CHAIRMAN (HOUTHUYS) LED THE EFFORT AGAIN THIS YEAR TO DO AWAY WITH THE SPECIAL LIST OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ILO CONVENTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS. AGAIN, HE FAILED. BUT THE PERSISTENCE WITH WHICH HE AND HIS ALLIES PURSUE THIS EFFORT, WITH MORE THAN TACIT ASSISTANCE FROM THE SECRETARIAT AND, THIS YEAR, FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE (VELDKAMP, GOVERNMENT DELEGATE, NETHERLANDS) GIVES RISE FOR CONCERN. THIS SPECIAL LIST OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ILO CONVENTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IS

THE VERY HEART OF THE ORGANIZATION'S PURPOSE. IF NO PUBLIC MENTION IS MADE OF LACK OF ADHERENCE TO RATIFIED ILO STANDARDS, THEN THERE IS NO POINT IN ENACTING THEM IN THE FIRST PLACE."

US GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES PARTICIPATING IN THE COMMITTEE AGREE THAT THIS IS AN ACCURATE ASSESSMENT, BUT HAVE REFRAINED, OF COURSE, FROM CRITICIZING EITHER VELDKAMP OR HOUTHUYS.

THE COMMITTEE'S FULL REPORT HAS BEEN AIRPOUCHED TO THE EMBASSY. KISSINGER

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